



American Flag Folding Ceremony

*The Tradition That Pays Respect to Soldiers and
Enduring American Principles*



On this Fourth of July, while many flags wave, let's reflect on one tradition that highlights the American heritage our flag is meant to symbolize.

According to Army and Navy tradition, when the flag is lowered no part of it should touch the ground. Then, the flag is carefully folded into the shape of a three-cornered hat. The hat symbolizes the hats worn by colonial soldiers during the American Revolution. During the folding process, the flag is folded so the red stripes fold into the blue portion of the flag, signifying the way the light of day recedes into the darkness of night.

The paragraphs that follow outline the typical sequence of the reading in flag folding ceremonies by the Uniformed Services.

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars which represents the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

In the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, stands as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in

times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong." The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of American, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they are found within or without the boundaries of our republic. The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day. The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the characters of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born. The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."

Source: www.usflag.org